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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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General segment

Provisional summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 21 July 2005, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Nesho (Vice-President) ..... (Albania)

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05-43348 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (E/INCB/2004/1)

1. **Mr. Ghodse** (President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)), introducing the annual report of the Board (E/INCB/2004/1), said that the Board began by explaining how Governments could balance efforts to reduce demand and supply in order to achieve a sustainable long-term improvement of the overall drug control situation. Because supply and demand of illicit drugs were inextricably linked, demand and supply reduction programmes implemented in isolation could have only limited success. The Board called on Governments to develop and implement integrated strategies. To make real progress towards significant reductions in drug production, trafficking and abuse, Governments must ensure that there was operational and policy-level integration of demand and supply reduction efforts.

2. By 2004, Afghanistan had again become by far the largest cultivator of opium poppy in the world, supplying the majority of illicit markets worldwide. The illicit manufacture of heroin was also gaining ground. All in all, the drug control situation posed a severe threat to national security with the potential of endangering the country's political transition. The President of Afghanistan had reaffirmed his determination to address the problem. Nonetheless, the Board would expect to see progress in the situation when it visited the country after the parliamentary elections scheduled for September 2005. Until there was a marked improvement, article 14 of the Single Convention of 1961 remained invoked.

3. Many countries were affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and drug trafficking, drug abuse and related problems had the potential to imperil development and human security. Drug abuse, particularly among child soldiers, continued in countries emerging from conflict and civil strife, and the Board was paying close attention to post-conflict situations.

4. He drew attention to draft resolution I, entitled "Treatment of pain using opioid analgesics", adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-eighth session. The Board had repeatedly raised its concern about the lack of availability of opioid analgesics, which were essential in the treatment of pain, and therefore in palliative care for HIV/AIDS, cancer and other chronic diseases. While developing countries represented about 80 per cent of the world's population, they accounted for only 6 per cent of the world's consumption of morphine. Access to medication was a human right, particularly in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, and populations everywhere should have access to palliative care. The Board urged the Council to adopt the draft resolution as a first step towards achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

5. Billions of doses of medicines containing internationally controlled substances were sold illicitly over the Internet every year by unlicensed pharmacies, posing potentially fatal health risks to consumers. Just as Internet pharmacies did not require a prescription, they usually did not verify the age of customers, and as a result, they had already become a major source of drugs for children and adolescents. The Board therefore urged the Council to adopt draft resolution 48/5, which called for strengthening international cooperation to prevent the use of the Internet to commit drug-related crime.

6. A handful of countries were still not parties to any of the three Conventions that formed the cornerstone of the international drug control regime. The accession of all States to those treaties and their universal implementation were prerequisites for effective drug control worldwide.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(e) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2005/54)

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(l) Women and development (E/2005/27, Corr.1)

Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (E/2005/27, and Corr.1, E/2005/54, E/2005/75, A/60/38 (Part I) and A/60-62-E/2005/10)

7. **Ms. Myanja** (Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, Division for the Advancement of Women), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/2005/54), said that the report was based on input received from United Nations entities, and highlighted gaps between policy and practice in the area of gender mainstreaming. It outlined actions planned and made recommendations for consideration by the Council on enhancing gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system.

8. In the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995, gender mainstreaming had been clearly established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality. In 1997, the Council's agreed conclusions had defined it as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels." It entailed bringing the perception, experience, knowledge and interests of women as well as men to bear on policymaking, planning and decision-making. The importance of that strategy had been reinforced at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000. A major breakthrough had occurred in the area of peace and security, with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and armed conflict, which had recognized the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations.

9. Despite progress made in gender mainstreaming, a gap between policy and practice had persisted. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms were not yet fully developed and implemented, and gender analysis was not systematically used as the basis for policy and programme development. In order to ensure the implementation of policies, strategies and action plans on gender equality, it was particularly important to link them to overall goals within the organizations of the United Nations system, and to incorporate gender perspectives in programming processes, including programme budgets and multi-year funding frameworks. The adoption of gender mainstreaming action plans had been instrumental in moving entities towards implementation, but much remained to be done. The report contained a number of recommendations that the Council might wish to adopt, to encourage the gender mainstreaming process.

10. **Ms. Hughes** (United States of America) said that some of the most important facets of the work of the Council involved women who lacked education, including those driven from their home by human rights abuse. Unfortunately, in many regions of the world, women's lack of real political power and economic strength began in childhood, when too many girls were unable to attend school because there were not enough spaces for all children or because not enough value was placed on girls' education. Countries paid a high price when girls were unable to attend school. Women who lacked education were more vulnerable to poverty, hunger, violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking. They were more likely to die in childbirth and were at greater risk of disease, including HIV/AIDS. Currently, two thirds of all people in the world who were illiterate were women.

11. Education was the first step in empowering women in society. A second key ingredient was equal economic access in the marketplace. Property rights and access to credit unleashed an enormous productive potential and promoted development. The third key pillar was full participation in a political system. Women's participation in a context of the rule of law added to the freedom that permitted economic development to flourish. Taken together, education, economic empowerment and democratic participation were mutually reinforcing.

12. Her Government welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund and had made a $10 million contribution. It also supported the Secretary-General's idea of a Peacebuilding Commission under the direction of the Security Council that would enable the United Nations to be more effective in galvanizing the international community to help countries in post-conflict situations.

13. There was a clear connection between gross violations of human rights and refugee outflows, and the most recent chapter in that sad story of inhumanity was Darfur, the Sudan, where residents had suffered wide-scale violence and atrocities. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) was working to help some 200,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad. Her delegation saluted the Chadian Government for its generosity and UNHCR for its diligence.

14. Her delegation supported the creation of a human rights council to address the most serious human rights situations more effectively. The protection of human rights was one of the most solemn duties of the United Nations, a Charter responsibility that should be a source of hope to millions of oppressed people throughout the world. The proposed Council was a critical mechanism to shine the spotlight of freedom on injustice and the needs of suffering people.

15. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that, as primary caregivers in all societies, women were central agents of development. That was reflected in the third Millennium Development Goal, which called for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. That Goal was also fundamental for the achievement of the others, as few things were as important to successful development as the social, political and economic participation of women.

16. If the common goals were to improve health and education, reduce child mortality, curtail the spread of HIV/AIDS, support robust civil society, increase productivity and promote democracy, then development efforts must target women specifically. Education played a central role, and his Government had long recognized the importance of the education of women in developing countries. It had supported adult literacy projects and grass-roots projects targeted at widows and single mothers. Girls' education was becoming an increasingly important part of its development cooperation.

17. History had shown the negative relationship between conflict and development. Moreover, women tended to be disproportionately affected by conflict, thereby diminishing their important contribution to development. The role of women was also particularly important in post-conflict societies. The Icelandic authorities acknowledged the nexus between gender, conflict and development, and an important part of their development cooperation was directed towards smooth transitions from conflict situations, with special emphasis on women. Iceland would more than triple its contribution to UNIFEM.

18. The ambitious poverty reduction goals set out in the Millennium Declaration would not be achieved without the promotion of gender equality. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance for the international community to remain committed to advancing the Beijing Platform for Action.

19. **Ms. Tawfi** (Observer for Iraq) said that Iraqi women had suffered under 35 years of dictatorship, and were currently the victims of war and poverty. They had looked forward to relief in the new Iraq of democracy and human rights, and had made great strides since the old regime had fallen, through the drafting of the Constitution that would lead to free and fair elections.

20. However, the forces of evil and terror which were trying to disrupt that process had affected the situation and rights of women as well. Iraqi women would take responsibility for building the new Iraq and had shown great courage. In the recent National Assembly elections, the first in 50 years, 25 per cent of the seats had been reserved for women, who actually held 31 per cent. There were six women ministers in the new Government, and, for the first time, women diplomats represented Iraq abroad. Effective women's organizations had been established, and civil society and non-governmental organizations played an active role. The Transitional Government had placed a high priority on guaranteeing women's rights.

21. Her delegation thanked all Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to build the new Iraq, and urged their continued cooperation and assistance.

22. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that the Secretary-General's report highlighted continuing gaps and challenges in the drive to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. It also identified future action needed to bridge the gap between policy and progress. Among the remaining obstacles were underdeveloped monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms, inadequate use of gender specialists, and insufficient capacity for gender analysis. To overcome those obstacles, a major effort to shift organizational philosophy and institutional mindsets was necessary. Indonesia therefore endorsed calls to strengthen the commitment of senior managers to institutionalize gender mainstreaming, and welcomed the work of United Nations specialized agencies that had put

improved accountability measures in place. However, it was also important to build national capacities to monitor progress in the implementation of international commitments. United Nations and donor agencies must provide greater support to building national capacities to report gender-related statistics. He particularly commended efforts by various United Nations agencies to publish a framework for gender analysis in their response to the 2004 tsunami disaster.

23. Indonesia was concerned that only one fourth of responding entities had adopted action plans as gender-mainstreaming implementation mechanisms. Such plans were necessary not only to provide guidelines on gender equality and gender-mainstreaming strategies and programmes, but also to establish lines of responsibility and accountability for staff and management. Indonesia therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation on the adoption of gender-mainstreaming action plans. Progress on gender mainstreaming at the United Nations would certainly bolster similar efforts at the national level.

24. **Ms. Ahmed** (Bangladesh) said the United Nations had played the role of catalyst in the gradual empowerment of women since its founding in 1945. Four world conferences on women and many more follow-up events had greatly helped to advance the cause of women. The Organization still had the key role to play — as collator, translator and transmitter of best practices throughout the wider international community. The advancement of women was a central component of Bangladesh's major policy thrusts. Immediately following the 1995 Beijing Conference, it had drawn up a National Plan of Action in line with the Beijing Declaration. It focused, among other things, on active collaboration with non-governmental organizations and human rights groups. The country's National Council for Women's Development was headed by the Prime Minister herself.

25. Poverty eradication and gender mainstreaming were intertwined. Equal access to credit and opportunities for men and women was essential. Bangladesh's budget was "gender-sensitive", with its largest percentage allocated to education, particularly to the expansion of women's education. In a recent report, the World Bank had described Bangladesh as a pioneer in South Asia in narrowing gender disparities at the primary and secondary levels. Moreover, through the successful use of microcredit, more than 12 million women were now self-reliant. Economic empowerment had also led Bangladesh's women to political empowerment. There were now 13,000 elected women representatives in local government. Women were campaigning for direct election to seats in the National Parliament, over and above the 45 seats officially reserved for them. At the international level, Bangladesh had been in the forefront of all debates on the empowerment of women, and was a party to almost all the major international instruments relating to the rights of women.

26. **Ms. Bahemuka** (Kenya) said that key legislative changes had been initiated at various levels through Kenya's National Policy on Gender and Development. Implementation of those initiatives would ensure alleviation of gender inequalities. But despite some strides in advancing the status of women, certain cultural practices prejudicial to the health of women and girls persisted. Nevertheless, they were being addressed, and she believed that the enactment of the Children's Act in 2002 and the introduction of alternative rites of passage for young girls would help rectify that situation.

27. The introduction of free primary education in 2003 had led to an unprecedented increase in the enrolment of children, particularly girls, in Kenya's schools. The draft constitution, currently before Parliament, sought to entrench legislation that would enhance the rights of women in the face of harmful traditional and cultural practices, incorporating the principles of affirmative action, equal access to resources, and equal citizenship. HIV/AIDS had had profound consequences for women. As part of the measures introduced to combat the pandemic, Constituency AIDS Control Committees had been established, a third of whose members were women. That effort was complemented by the National Women's Programme of Prevention, Advocacy and Support, which highlighted the gender implications of the pandemic. Greater access to affordable antiretroviral drugs would reduce the burden on women, who were the primary caregivers. Continued support from Kenya's development partners would be crucial in that effort.

28. **Ms. Rivington** (Canada) said that full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Member States, United Nations bodies and members of civil society had emphasized the intrinsic relationship between

gender equality and development. Mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout development efforts was not only an expression of that relationship, but a crucial element in ensuring that all goals were met. She had been struck by the relevance of gender equality to virtually every area under discussion. For example, peace would not be achieved without recognition of women's role in peacebuilding processes, and the highest standards of health would be inaccessible without recognition of women's sexual and reproductive rights. The Council's 2004 review of gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system had provided a needed opportunity to assess the strengths and shortcomings of the gender mainstreaming activities of United Nations programmes, departments, funds and agencies. While United Nations bodies had achieved some success in that area, the goal of system-wide gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of the United Nations system had yet to be attained. Canada was pleased to be presenting, alongside Indonesia, the 2005 resolution on mainstreaming the gender perspective. The resolution called upon all United Nations entities to intensify efforts to address the challenges, and offered specific prescriptions to that end.

29. **Ms. Moreno** (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)) said that the INSTRAW progress reports on the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized existing good practices in reducing gender inequality and identifying areas where further efforts were needed. Convinced that the economic empowerment of women was essential for equality, participation and democracy, INSTRAW had launched a pioneering study on gender and remittances. The study had already shown the significant transformative effect that women's migration and economic empowerment could have on household gender relations and on women's ability to take decisions for themselves and their families. At a meeting of experts, convened on 30 June 2005 to reflect on the complex intersections between migration, gender, remittances and development, one participant had situated the phenomenon of remittances within the context of the current phase of globalization. INSTRAW itself had presented a working paper preparing the ground for analysis of the impact of gender on patterns of sending and using remittances, as well as the impact of remittances on gender relations within recipient households and communities. Other participants had addressed the potential of remittances as tools for development, along with the concept of "social" remittances — the flow of ideas, values and images that (together with money) circulated between origin and destination countries. Remittances represented a large part of the foreign resources entering developing countries, outstripping overseas development assistance and foreign investment. Women, who represented almost half of the world's estimated 175 million economic migrants, were migrating in increasing numbers, and their remittances made significant contributions to their households and the development of their communities. INSTRAW was promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in the analysis of migration and remittances.

30. The Institute's work on gender and security sector reform had shown that unless the definition of security was reconceptualized to include the human security of women at home and in their communities, women would continue to be killed simply for being women. The physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence daily perpetrated against women throughout the world still constituted the most significant obstacle to gender equality.

31. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico) said that important advances had been made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. But persistent obstacles and difficulties — both de jure and de facto — still hampered full implementation of the actions agreed upon a decade ago. Mexico was discharging its commitments in connection with gender equality and the fight against discrimination against women. It thanked Canada for its intention to present a resolution on the subject, which contained proactive elements that would permit the Council to advance firmly towards the achievement of its objectives. Mexico fully supported efforts to incorporate gender perspectives in all entities of the United Nations, particularly in complex strategies and sectoral programmes where the gender perspective had already been partially incorporated. As acknowledged in the summit on financing for development, the gender analysis in those areas was indispensable. Mexico was convinced of the need to improve the evaluation and follow-up indicators in connection with the discharge of the institutional action programmes. That effort would bear fruit only to the degree that the Organization earmarked greater resources — human, financial and

material — in order to optimize the expected results. Mexico was convinced that, given the main obstacles and challenges facing the various agencies promoting gender equality within the United Nations, the Council must strengthen coordination among them and, as far as possible, avoid duplication of effort. For that reason, Mexico welcomed the report by the Executive Board of INSTRAW and the report of the independent commission on the status of UNIFEM. Within the framework of United Nations reform, the Council must consider the mechanisms most capable of enhancing the comparative advantages of all the relevant agencies and institutions.

Introduction of draft resolution E/2005/L.32

32. **Ms. Rivington** (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on behalf of its sponsors, Jordan, Mexico, the Niger, Slovenia and Canada. The sponsors had served on the Consultative Committee to UNIFEM. In 2004 the Committee had requested the establishment of an independent advisory panel to report on the Fund's current status and its future role and structure. The report had been circulated to members of the Economic and Social Council as document E/2005/10. The purpose of the draft resolution was to welcome the report and to forward it for further discussion.

33. **The President** said that chapter 1, section A, of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/2005/27 and Corr.1) contained a draft declaration on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. He would take it that the Council wished to transmit the draft to the General Assembly,

34. *It was so decided.*

35. **The President** said that draft resolution I, "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women", had been adopted in the Commission by a recorded vote of 38 to 1, with 2 abstentions. As the draft resolution would entail a vote, action was being postponed to a time when the Council would meet in a conference room with the capacity for recorded voting.

36. He recalled that draft resolution II, "Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan", had been adopted by the Commission by consensus. He took it that the Council wished to adopt it.

37. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters: elections, nominations and appointments postponed from previous sessions

38. **The President** recalled that in Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/69, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters had been renamed the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, with a membership of 25 experts. Under the terms of that resolution, candidates were nominated by Governments for membership in the Committee. The members were then appointed by the Secretary-General after notification was given to the Social Council. In document E/2005/9/Add.11, the Secretary-General had duly notified the Council of the 25 experts he had selected to serve on the Committee in their personal capacity for a four-year term expiring on 30 June 2009. Biographical information on the appointees was also contained in the note by the Secretary-General. He took it that the Council wished to take note of the appointments made by the Secretary-General.

39. *It was so decided.*

40. **The President** said that information regarding the 24 experts nominated by the Secretary-General to serve in their personal capacity on the Committee of Experts on Public Administration was contained in document E/2005/9/Add.12. He took it that the Council approved their nomination for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2006.

41. *It was so decided.*

42. **The President** said that the Group of Western European and Other States had endorsed Sweden to fill one of its vacancies on the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting. He took it that the Council elected Sweden by acclamation to the Working Group for a three-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2006.

43. *It was so decided.*

44. **The President** asked whether, in respect of the remaining vacancies, the Council agreed to further postpone elections to the Working Group on the following lines: one member from Asian States, two members from Latin American and Caribbean States and three members from Western European and other

States, for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2005; and one member from Asian States, two members from Latin American and Caribbean States and three members from Western European and other States, for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2006.

45. *It was so decided.*

46. **The President** said that in the Group of Western European and Other States, two candidates remained to be nominated to the Council for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for Programme and Coordination. In addition, subsequent to its nomination in April, the United Kingdom had withdrawn its candidacy for election to the Committee. As a result, there were now three vacancies to be filled from that Group. He had been advised that the Group had endorsed the nomination of Switzerland for one of those seats. He took it that the Council wished to nominate Switzerland for election by the General Assembly to the Committee for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2006.

47. *It was so decided.*

48. **The President** asked whether the Council, with regard to the two outstanding vacancies on the Committee, agreed to postpone the nomination of two members from that Group for election for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2006.

49. *It was decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations E/2005/SR.35

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

27 September 2005

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Substantive session of 2005
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 35th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 21 July 2005, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Nesho (Vice-President) ..... (Albania)

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (*continued*)

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05-43356 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Social and human rights questions (E/2005/74, E/2005/CRP.3 and E/2005/Misc.1)

(b) Social development (E/2005/26 and A/60/61-E/2005/7)

(c) Crime prevention and criminal justice (E/2005/30, E/2005/3 and E/2005/3/Add.1)

(d) Narcotic drugs (E/2005/28 and E/INCB/2004/1)

(e) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (E/2005/46)

Non-governmental organizations (E/2005/32 and E/2005/32/Corr.1 (Parts I and II))

1. **Mr. Morris** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) introduced two oral reports on various aspects of the Office's activities from January 2004 up to mid-year 2005. The first was an oral update on the coordination aspects of the work of UNHCR pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/153. The Secretary-General had called for greater coherence and integration within the Organization, which had opened up opportunities to work more closely with other actors within the United Nations. Partnerships were the only means of helping countries torn by conflict to create conditions for sustainable return. On the humanitarian front, UNHCR was working closely with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in a number of areas. Most recently, for example, UNHCR had become engaged in an inter-agency process aimed at improving assistance and protection to internally displaced persons and ensuring a more comprehensive and reliable response to their needs.

2. Coordination within the humanitarian community was linked to cooperation with the World Food Programme. UNHCR frequently faced intolerable situations where it was unable to get an acceptable level of food and water to refugees; it was therefore working on joint solutions in order to be able to provide life-sustaining basic assistance to persons fleeing conflict or persecution. The High Commissioner was also exploring ways to build on and strengthen ties with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

3. UNHCR continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations especially in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). In that regard, it had been working with United Nations peacekeeping missions in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported the establishment of a peacebuilding commission and hoped to contribute to the peacebuilding support office to be created within the United Nations.

4. In terms of longer-term recovery strategies, the Office's membership in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was beginning to show concrete results. UNHCR was now actively participating in the joint UNDG/World Bank needs assessments for countries emerging from conflict and in transition from relief to development. It had become the tenth co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in 2004, and hoped to share the expertise it had developed in addressing the pandemic in conflict-affected areas.

5. Turning to the second report on activities in Africa, he noted that some 4.5 million people, including approximately 2.8 million refugees, were of concern to UNHCR. Political and security tensions had continued to prevail in a number of regions on the African continent, producing further refugee outflows mainly in Central and West Africa, the Great Lakes region and even in the Sudan, despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. UNHCR remained vigilant about the physical security of refugees and had, for example, expressed its deep concern to the Governments that had recently forced more than 5,000 Rwandan refugees to return home, contrary to the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

6. Voluntary repatriation continued to be a key objective of the Office's operations in Africa. Despite continued fluid political and security situations in some parts of the continent, considerable progress had been made in repatriation operations and with regard to sustainable solutions for returnees. Referring to successful repatriation operations in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia, he expressed the hope that targeted

organized repatriation of Sudanese refugees to southern Sudan would start later in 2005. The challenge in all repatriation operations was to ensure the sustainability of returns by addressing the reintegration needs of returnees and internally displaced persons, and the post-conflict reconstruction priorities of the communities in the areas of return. That was critical to creating the conditions for lasting peace in post-conflict societies.

7. Referring to internal displacement, he said that more people were internally displaced on the African continent than in the rest of the world combined. UNHCR, with the support of the international community and other United Nations agencies, had mounted a large-scale humanitarian operation to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons fleeing civil conflict in the Sudan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, about 1 million internally displaced persons had spontaneously returned home, but resumed fighting in some provinces had resulted in the fresh displacement of tens of thousands of others. In conclusion, he noted that UNHCR, in close collaboration with States and its partner humanitarian and development agencies, would continue to strive to offer protection, durable solutions and improved standards of assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Africa and in all other areas of its activities across the globe.

8. **Mr. Vetere** (Division for Treaty Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty (E/2005/3 and E/2005/3/Add.1) and the report of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/2005/30). The first report and its addendum covering the period 1999 to 2003 were based on information provided by 72 countries and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as current criminological data. Notwithstanding the 15 per cent increase in the total number of States participating in the survey, a large majority of the replies had been from countries that were abolitionist or against the death penalty for ordinary crimes only. Moreover, many retentionist States or those in favour of the death penalty had not provided accurate or comprehensive statistics on the number of death sentences imposed, appeals allowed, or executions carried out, with relevant breakdowns by age, gender and type of offence.

9. He dwelled at some length on the responses of Oman and Qatar. With respect to the former, he noted, inter alia, that no changes had occurred in the status of the death penalty during the reporting period, although no capital sentences had been imposed nor executions carried out since 1998. Qatar had reported, among other things, that capital punishment had been abolished for juveniles, the elderly, women and the mentally disabled, although the number of capital offences had been extended to include the import/export of drugs and terrorist crimes.

10. Turning to the second report, he said that there had been some progress in restricting the scope of capital punishment in several countries. Discussion on the prospect of doing so in others was ongoing, most notably in China. There had also been progress in abolishing the mandatory imposition of the death sentence in several countries and in restricting further the imposition of the death penalty on those under the age of 18, the elderly, mentally retarded persons, the mentally ill and women. Of particular concern in a number of countries were the conditions under which persons were kept in confinement while under sentence of death. There was a need to continue monitoring the implementation of safeguards.

11. The survey showed a continuing trend towards abolition and further restriction of the use of capital punishment around the world. Indeed, during the survey period, 10 countries had abolished capital punishment and three more had done so in 2004. Seventeen States had not executed any offenders during at least 10 years. According to available figures, the rates of executions had also fallen over the period under review in most countries that provided for capital punishment in their legislation. However, three countries that were formerly de facto abolitionist had resumed executions, but at a significantly lower level than before.

12. Twenty countries had ratified one or other of the international instruments that barred the reintroduction of the death penalty. In 2002, a fourth international instrument had been adopted: Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the total abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for crimes committed in times of war and imminent threat of war.

13. **Mr. Pirogov** (Russian Federation) expressed support for the role of the United Nations in combating new challenges and threats in transnational organized crime. Among other things, he welcomed the results of the 2005 sessions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as well as the results of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In the twenty-first century, transnational organized crime had become a major threat to international security and to the socio-economic development of all States. It could only be countered through close international cooperation. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols represented an adequate unified response to that threat. The Russian Federation, which gave top priority to combating crime, had ratified the Convention and its Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. Their provisions were now in force in the country. Changes had been introduced into Russian legislation to criminalize trafficking in human beings and the use of slave labour, and additional amendments were being prepared that would allow the Government to accede to requests relating to legal assistance in criminal matters, without reference to the need to preserve bank secrecy.

14. Furthermore, the United Nations Convention against Corruption was in the final phase of ratification; upon ratification, amendments would be introduced into national legislation. Referring to the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210, he said that the rapid adoption and entry into force of an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism was vital to ensuring international peace and security.

15. The illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs threatened the future of many countries, since its victims were mostly children and youths. In addition, profits from that trade financed international terrorist groups and sparked a spiral of crime and violence in drug-producing countries, transit countries and countries where drugs were consumed. In that regard, he agreed with the conclusion of the United Nations experts that the narcotics problem in Afghanistan could wipe out the political and military successes achieved in that country in recent years.

16. His delegation was also concerned by the threat of synthetic drugs, especially in the Baltic States, which appeared to be the main source of such drugs coming into the Russian Federation. His country, which played a key role in checking the expansion of drugs from Afghanistan, was an active participant in the Paris process and envisaged holding a round table in 2005, which could considerably boost cooperation between transit countries and countries where drugs were consumed and provide a major impetus in identifying and neutralizing criminal groups involved in the sale and transfer of Afghan drugs and their precursors. Lastly, while his delegation was in favour of strengthening the role and authority of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it was concerned at the reduction in the duration of the Commission's sessions, since that created a situation where important issues of combating new threats and challenges were dealt with hastily, making it subsequently difficult to implement decisions in that regard.

17. **Mr. Ndimeni** (South Africa) said that the forty-third session of the Commission for Social Development, chaired by South Africa, had coincided with the tenth anniversary of the Copenhagen Summit and had afforded an opportunity to discuss achievements with respect to poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and social integration, as well as collective concerns currently facing the world within and across borders. His delegation would like to see a strengthened Commission that continued to utilize the expertise of ministers responsible for social development, social development experts, academics and civil society. The Commission had a unique role in harmonizing the implementation of social development goals at the national and regional levels with the programme of work of the Commission in New York. In that regard, his delegation had circulated a proposal for the methods of work during the forty-third session, which had been adopted by consensus on the understanding that further deliberations would be conducted during the forty-fourth session. Noting that issues such as youth, women, family and disability were vital, he urged the United Nations system and Member States to continue to give priority to social development.

Introduction of draft decision E/2005/L.17

18. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) introduced draft decision E/2005/L.17, entitled "Enlargement of the Executive

Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees". The text largely adhered to the format of previous Council decisions recommending enlarged membership.

Declaration to the General Assembly

19. **The President** said that chapter I, section A, of the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/2005/26) contained a declaration on the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development. He took it that the Council wished to transmit the declaration to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, including to the high-level event of the Assembly on the review of the Millennium Declaration.

20. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of draft resolutions

21. **The President** noted that chapter 1, section B, of the same report contained three draft resolutions for adoption by the Council.

22. *Draft resolution I, on further promotion of equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, was adopted.*

23. *Draft resolution II, on a comprehensive international convention to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, was adopted.*

24. *Draft resolution III, on the organization and methods of work of the Commission, was adopted.*

Adoption of draft decision

25. **The President** pointed out that in chapter 1, section C, of the same report, there was a draft decision entitled "Report of the Commission for Social Development on its forty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission".

26. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Decision 43/101

27. **The President** pointed out that chapter 1, section D, of the same report contained decision 43/101, entitled "Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institution for Social Development". He took it that the Council wished to confirm the nomination of the six candidates listed in that decision.

28. *It was so decided.*

Non-governmental organizations

29. **The President** drew attention to the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2005 session (E/2005/32 (Parts I and II)). In chapter 1, section A, of document E/2005/32 (Part II), there were five draft decisions for adoption by the Council.

30. *Draft decision I, entitled "Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations", was adopted.*

31. *Draft decision II, entitled "Suspension of consultative status", was adopted.*

32. **Mr. Ceinos-Cox** (United States of America) said that his delegation had opposed the recommendation that the consultative status of A Woman's Voice International should be suspended. The United States continued to oppose that recommendation and dissociated itself from the consensus on the draft decision. A Woman's Voice International was a human rights organization that assisted poor and illiterate women who were the victims of violence and discrimination. In particular, it had highlighted the Chinese Government's human rights abuses before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, citing concrete examples such as the exploitation of and trafficking in female North Korean refugees in China. It had also spoken about government persecution of Chinese Christians and the leaders of unregistered Christian churches. The United States applauded the organization's work in support of freedom of religion, and condemned China's suppression of its citizens' fundamental right of freedom of religion as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States did not believe it was a coincidence that an organization that brought attention to China's poor human rights record now faced suspension as a result of a complaint lodged by China at the Commission on Human Rights.

33. **Mr. Xie** Bohua (China) said that draft decision II had been adopted by an overwhelming majority of the members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, because the non-governmental organization in question had seriously violated the

rules of the Commission on Human Rights. In particular, during a session of the Commission, it had introduced an illegal weapon into the meeting room. That behaviour had been condemned by the secretariat of the Commission. The Committee had studied the material forwarded by the Commission and had decided by a large majority to suspend the organization's rights for one year in consequence. He adamantly rejected the view put forward by the United States concerning China's so-called poor human rights record. The Committee's action on draft decision II was unrelated to any study of human rights issues.

34. *Draft decision III, entitled "Withdrawal of consultative status", was adopted.*

35. *Draft decision IV, entitled "Issuance of documentation for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations", was adopted.*

36. *Draft decision V, entitled "Dates of the 2006 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and provisional agenda", was adopted.*

37. **The President** drew attention to document E/2005/32 (Part I), which contained draft decision IV, entitled "Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2005 regular session".

38. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan *(continued)*

Introduction of draft resolution E/2005/L.24

39. **Mr. Koubaa** (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the sponsors listed, which had been joined by Cuba, Indonesia and Iraq, introduced draft resolution E/2005/L.24, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation. The draft was largely similar to the one adopted the previous year, although a new eleventh preambular paragraph had been added, recalling international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and affirming that those instruments must be respected in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Another new preambular paragraph affirmed that those instruments must also be respected in the occupied Syrian Golan.

40. The draft resolution also recalled the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, as had the previous year's text, but the current text further stressed the need for full respect of the legal obligations mentioned in the advisory opinion. Moreover, paragraph 7 had been added, stressing that the wall was unlawful and was seriously debilitating to the economic and social development of the Palestinian people, and calling once again for full respect of the legal obligations mentioned in the advisory opinion. The draft also reaffirmed the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their national resources, and urged Member States to encourage private investment in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in order to alleviate the hardship of the Palestinian people.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.